

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1. (Canceled)

2. (Currently amended) The system of claim 3, wherein said verification means of each of the office automation devices comprises:

user information storage means for storing user information identifying at least one user permitted to operate the office automation device,

user information input means for inputting identification information identifying a user operating the office automation device, and

user verification means for verifying a user operating the office automation device in accordance with identification information input via the user information input means and user information stored in the user information storage means,

the information acquisition means of each of the office automation devices comprising:

counting means for counting an amount of usage of the office automation device by the verified user, and

information creation means for creating device usage information, the device usage information comprising the amount of usage of the office automation device counted by the counting means and information for identifying the verified user.

3. (Currently amended) A system ~~for managing a networked office automation device arranged and networked in a work place, comprising~~ in which a plurality of office automation devices arranged in a work place and a management server managing each of the office automation devices are connected via a network, wherein each of the office automation devices comprises:

verification means for verifying ~~operation of the office automation device by a verified user in the work place~~ a user attempting to operate each of the office automation devices and belonging to a predetermined section of the work place,

information acquisition means for acquiring device usage information including information of a user verified by the verification means and a value indicating an amount of usage of the office automation device by the verified user,

information storage means for sequentially storing the device usage information acquired by the information acquisition means,

~~amount acquisition means for acquiring a usage amount record of the office automation device based upon device usage information stored in the information storage means,~~

~~comparison means for comparing the usage amount record and a reference value and producing a comparison result, and~~

~~output means for outputting a message corresponding to the comparison result~~ wherein the management server comprises:

information collection means for collecting, via a network, the device usage information stored in the information storage means of each of the office automation devices, and

amount totalizing means for totalizing a usage amount record of the office automation devices, the usage amount record being associated with each user or a section in a company, based on the usage information collected by the information collection means.

4. (Currently amended) The system of claim 3, ~~comprising~~ wherein the management server comprises:

user usage amount acquisition means for acquiring a usage amount record of an arbitrary office automation device used by an arbitrary user based upon device usage information ~~stored in the information storage means~~ collected by the information collection means,

comparison means for comparing the usage amount record acquired by the user usage amount acquisition means and a reference value and producing a comparison result, and

output means for ~~outputting~~ sending, via the network, a message corresponding to the comparison result and generated by the comparison means to an office automation device operated by a targeted user and outputting the message to a display section of the office automation device.

5. (Currently amended) The system of claim 3, wherein the office automation device comprises a replaceable, expendable component, ~~comprising~~ wherein the management server comprises:

device usage amount acquisition means for acquiring a usage amount record of the office automation device subsequent to replacement of the replaceable, expendable component in the office automation device, based upon device usage information stored in the information storage means collected by the information collection means,

comparison means for comparing the usage amount record acquired by the user usage amount acquisition means and a reference value and producing a comparison result, and

output means for ~~outputting~~ sending, via the network, a message ~~corresponding to the comparison result~~ prompting the replacement of the replaceable, expendable component to the office automation device operated by a targeted user, and outputting the message to a display section of the office automation device, in a case where the usage amount exceeds the reference value in the comparison result of the comparison means.

6. (Currently amended) The system of claim 3, wherein the user is associated with a section, ~~comprising~~ and wherein the management server comprises:

section usage amount acquisition means for acquiring a totalized usage amount record indicating a usage amount of the office automation device totalized for the section associated with

the user, based upon device usage information ~~stored in the information storage means~~ collected by the information collection means,

comparison means for comparing the totalized usage amount record acquired by the section usage amount acquisition means and a reference value and producing a comparison result, and

output means for ~~outputting~~ sending, via the network, a message corresponding to the comparison result generated by the comparison means to an office automation device operated by a user of a targeted section and outputting the message to a display section of the office automation device.

7-14. (Canceled)

15. (Currently amended) A method for managing usage of ~~a networked office~~ an office automation device ~~arranged and networked in a work place in a system in which a plurality of office automation devices arranged in a work place and a management server are connected via a network,~~ the network comprising:

in each of the office automation devices,

verifying a user belonging to a predetermined section in the work place ~~operating and attempting to operate~~ the office automation device,

obtaining device usage information including the information of the verified user and the information of an amount of usage of the office automation device made by the verified user operating the office automation device,

~~acquiring usage information of the office automation device comprising the obtained amount of usage of the office automation device,~~

storing the acquired usage information sequentially ~~in a database,~~

~~processing the usage information stored in the database, and~~

~~based on a comparison of the amount of usage and a reference value,~~
~~sending a message corresponding to a comparison result to at least one of a user of the office~~
~~automation device and an administrator of the office automation device~~
an internal storage section, and
in the management server,
collecting the device usage information stored in a storage section of each of the office
automation devices,
totalizing a usage amount record of the office automation devices, the usage amount record
being associated with each user or section in a company, based on the collected device usage
information.

16-17 (Canceled)

18. (Currently amended) A computer program for executing a method of managing use of a networked office automation device ~~arranged and networked in a work place~~ in a system in which a plurality of office automation devices arranged in a work place and a management server are connected via a network, the method comprising:

in each of the office automation devices,

verifying a user belonging to a predetermined section in the work place ~~operating and attempting to operate~~ the office automation device,

obtaining device usage information including the information of the verified user and the information of an amount of usage of the office automation device made by the verified user operating the office automation device,

~~acquiring usage information of the office automation device comprising the obtained amount of usage of the office automation device,~~

storing the acquired usage information in a database an internal storage section,
processing the usage information stored in the database, and
based on a comparison of the amount of usage and a reference value,
sending a message corresponding to a comparison result to at least one of user of the office
automation device and an administrator of the office automation device and
in a management server,
collecting usage information stored in a storage section of each of the office automation
devices, and totalizing usage amount associated with each user or section in a company.

19-21 (Canceled)

22. (New) The system according to claim 3, wherein the management server comprises:
device usage amount acquisition means for acquiring an amount of usage of each of the
office automation devices within a past fixed time period;
determination means for comparing the amount of usage acquired by the device usage
amount acquisition means, with a reference value, and determining an office automation device
which is less frequently used and positioned improperly.